



**For Immediate Press Release:  
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**Contact: Ron Reynolds  
(804) 371-7156**

## **Enjoy the Fourth and Leave Fireworks to the Professionals**

**Richmond** - The Fourth of July is a time to celebrate our nation's independence and fireworks are a traditional part of that celebration. The Virginia State Fire Marshal's Office wants to help make sure we do that safely.

Fireworks, even the seemingly harmless sparklers, can result in intense heat of up to nearly 2,000 degrees Fahrenheit and can instantly burn skin and eyes, leading to serious injury, permanent vision loss and even death.

Consumer fireworks can be dangerous, not only to the user but to surrounding property and bystanders. According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, more than 9,000 fireworks-related injuries are seen in emergency rooms each year with almost 30 percent of these injuries to the eyes. Eight deaths were reported in 2004 as a result of fireworks incidents.

A 14-year study by the Children's Hospital in Columbus, Ohio indicates that a majority of fireworks injuries involve children below 11 years of age. Two-thirds of injuries from sparklers are among children less than five years old.

"Parents would not allow their child to play with matches or fire and should not allow them to play with fireworks which can be even more volatile and dangerous," said Ed Altizer, Virginia State Fire Marshal.

The State Fire Marshal's Office urges you to observe the following safety tips:

- Never let children play with fireworks of any type.
- To enjoy fireworks, attend public displays put on by trained professionals.
- Follow directions given by event coordinators or public safety personnel.
- If you find unexploded fireworks, do not touch them. Immediately contact your local fire or police departments.

Have a safe and enjoyable Fourth of July by following the advice of the Virginia State Fire Marshal's Office. For more information or questions regarding fireworks safety, call (804) 371-7170 or contact your local fire marshal.

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